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MRS. HELEN L. FISHER. In response to your request for some suggestions for a unique table cover, we can refer to one that is both unique and original in design, while simple, tasteful and inexpensive. It is felt of the best quality, in a lively shade of peacock-blue. A self fringe by clipping to the depth of three inches in strips something less than a fourth of an inch in width forms the border. Upon the end of each strip is set an old-fashioned white crystal bead, and heading the fringe are three rows of tinsel couched on, the lowermost row of gold, the middle row of variegated, and the uppermost row of silver, laid on so as to reveal a suspicion of blue between the threads. In each corner is stamped a large conventional design, imitative of magnified wild roses done on the tips of the petals in sketchy Kensington embroidery in white rope silk outlined with silver tinsel, the stamens in French knots in silk of old gold color thickly seeded with small crystal beads—these beads, with those on the fringe, giving the effect of dew-drops. A very rich table cover has the centre of silk plush in crushed strawberry color, with a border of satin in sapphire blue, the border outlaid with black guipure lace eight inches deep, the lace furnishing a design for rich satin embroidery in colors suggested by the design. The heading, or grounding of the lace is crossed at each mesh by two shades of olive green held by a gold bead, and heading the border and covering the selvege of the lace is a band of inch-wide black velvet ribbon confined by herring bone stitch in olive green; this crossed by silk in paler olive, and the crossing held by gold beads. But this table-cover has not the merit of inexpensiveness, and indeed was only attempted by the owner, who is not an extravagant woman, to use up a lace flounce that had been lying by for a number of years. As an expedient for the purpose intimated it is a happy thought. Very handsome scarfs are made of plush, satin and felt, with lace covered with embroidery after the pattern of lace at the ends, beads and tinsel threads being late resources of fancy for rendering the work more showy and attractive.

CITY LADY: Pine cones serve for varied and interesting decoration in country houses and would furnish refreshing di-

version in city houses. As a rule we are too much inclined, with the means at command, to give up to the furniture dealer and upholsterer, and thus our houses lack the individuality, as it were, of the more delicate and delightful touches of the taste and ingenuity of the mistresses. An ingenious lady, who has learned to use both the saw and the hammer with dexterity, devises an interesting corner cabinet of deal wood with four shelves of graduated size, the lowermost about two and one-half feet broad and one foot deep, and the uppermost about ten inches broad and six inches deep. The shelves are carved on the front, and the shape is indeed a revival of the *étagère* of twenty-five years ago. The sides are stained cherry color and varnished, and the shelves are covered with plush in a dark shade of olive color. Pine cones, not quite fully grown and not open strung each on stout *macramé* linen thread and confined by talks, forming a fringe around the shelves, a band of blue plush fastened on with tacks with large brass beads, heading the fringe. The pine cones having been varnished as soon as they were dry, their fresh appearance is preserved. The timber used in the construction of this novel and pretty piece of furniture was of dry-goods boxes given the lady. The cones were from the young pines in the grounds of the house of a friend; the plush, the tacks, the staining and the varnish being the appreciable expense.

Handsome wall pockets are made of the baskets for the purpose, decorated with a cluster of fully-grown and open pine cones, hung on cords and tied together with a bow of ribbon. For the natural effect we like better the cones simply varnished, although the prevailing taste is to give the cones a coat of bronze or gold paint. A pretty basket in illustration is of braided straw of wide wedge shape, with open work at the top through which is run a band of old-red ribbon two inches wide; the three cones which ornament it are painted severally, bronze, old gold and dull silver, touched on the tips of the scales, or sepals, with glistening silver to give the effect of frost, and hung by a bouquet bow in old-red, blue, olive and silver. In a country cottage filled with the evidences of the taste and industry of the mistress, on old fisherman's basket, given a coat of bronze paint, and decorated with a bunch of fine long pine



DECORATIVE PANEL, BY J. F. PENET.

## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

cones painted in dull gold with touches of bright silver to represent frost, hung by a bow of bright red satin ribbon, furnishes a delightful bit of ornamentation between the windows of the parlor, draped as they are, with curtains of Japanese muslin in blue and white, finished with fringe of small tassels hung on cord.

**BUSY FINGERS.** From what you tell of your performances in handy work, we would have been glad if you had given us your real name. With three silk quilts, an antique crochet lace bed set, five bureau sets, four *beaufait* covers, six splashes, two sofa robes, two sets of doyleys and a dozen anti-macassers, "with various other pieces of fancy work, many of which have been accorded prizes at provincial fairs," you assuredly deserve to head the list of champions in enterprises of decorative industries. You ask us suggestion in reference to another crochet lace bed set, and also whether there can be offered any new idea in regard to silk patchwork—that "the antique pattern of crochet lace has been 'done to death,' and of crazy-quilts there is a surfeiture."

An idea of our own in the matter of the crochet lace set, is in patterns of small blocks or squares about eight inches each way, in two designs—the double daisy for one and a cluster of roses, for instances, for the other, filled out to form squares—these jointed alternately for the coverlet and the pillow spreads, and finished with a border to match the design. The formula for the work would occupy quite too much space for the limits assigned our article; beside, as you tell us you are an adept in all patterns of crochet, you scarcely need directions for the work; or if so, you can find them in some one of the convenient hand books. Line your bed set with ciel blue or pink silesia. And just here, as suggested by your remark that you "find it difficult to keep pillow shams of lace on feather pillows," we would inform you that there are sham pillows, made of card-board and covered with silesia, that are very handy, as they are very stiff and hold the cover in place, and being hollow they cover and keep in place and free from dust the feather pillow.

An agreeable variety in silk crazy work is noticeable in the covering for a sofa pillow, in which the hap-hazard design is not outlined by indescribable embroidery stitches; but the silk, neatly laid in place, has a vine in feather stitching in shaded gold color to wander all over it, clusters of red dots, imitative of berries, here and there dropping from points in the vine. The effect is altogether new and charming. We are disposed to ridicule the mimic human figures, toads, umbrellas and other comical creations of fancy done in outline stitch on crazy work. They are rarely ever suggestive in shape of anything under the sun, and effectually mar the early intention of imitating Japanese handy work in hap-hazard silk quilts.

**ELLEN DE COURCY.** This will hardly reach you in time to make the proposed *monchoir* case for a Christmas present to your friend, while it may serve your purpose for the proposed birthday *souvenir*. Buy a square of satin—a black satin monchoir case is elegant and appropriate for a gentleman—paint in the centre a bunch of poppies and corn-flowers, pansies, violets

or wild roses, or have the satin quilted in quadruple on glazed wadding, and have the squares lined with marcelline or some other light silk. Then lay flat around as a border, a piece of spanish silk, the scalloped edge turned inward, and sew on the edge a large silk bullion cord. Now turn the corners to the centre, sewing three firmly together on the wrong side, to form a pocket, leaving the fourth as a flap; or, this may also be sewed down several inches with room enough left to slip in a handkerchief. Turn the case and finish with a rich bow or ribbon, to which may be added a spray of velvet flowers. The design is beautiful and the case extremely convenient. The wadding may be scented with Frangipani, violet or rose powder; although as many persons dislike the odor of all these powders, it is better to slip a little sachet in the case, to be removed if disagreeable.

For your old schoolmate, perhaps you would like what may be called "scented pads" for bureau drawers. They are nicest when made of white tissue veiling, or muslin, over two sheets of scented wadding, finished at the edge with feather stitching or overcasting, and tacked here and there in squares with tiny bows of baby ribbon; or, bows of the very narrow ribbon used for ribbon embroidery. The pads are made to fit the bottom of the bureau drawers. You may vary the color for each drawer, making that for small pieces of white, or you can vary the color of the ribbons used in the bows. A set of these bureau pads is a very dainty, simple present for a bride, and a suitable present from an expectant god-mother to her expectant god-child.

**FANNY G. LANE.** "Have you ever seen a picture frame decorated with nutshells?" Yes, years ago; and with the disposition to revive fancies of the past; nutshell frames will admirably bear revival. Have a common pine wood frame not less than three inches wide. Abstract carefully the kernels from butternuts, English walnuts, filberts, almonds Brazils and any other nuts of table use, and gather the balls of what is vulgarly called the sweet gum tree, the small cones of the hemlock, and other ever-greens and acorns, having them all perfectly dried. Spread on the frame a thin layer of well worked putty, or attach the shells, acorns, etc., with very strong glue. When dry give a coat of varnish, or a variegated effect may be secured by using gold, bronze and silver or nickel paint. The most correct taste would be in applying the nuts promiscuously as nature abhors formality, although order is averred to be "heaven's first law;" while order in arrangement would be easy. For example, around the inner edge of the frame could be a row of small spruce cones; around the outlet edge, could be a row of acorns in their cups; in each corner could set a cluster of three sweet-gum balls; in regular positions could come a half shell of the English walnut, etc., a place assigned to each variety. If paint is used let a rim of gold be given the nuts on the inner edge of the frame, so as to brighten the effect of the picture. These frames would be handsome and appropriate even for oil paintings, while varnished only, they would be more suitable for steel engravings and untinted photographs of buildings and landscapes.



DECORATIVE PANEL, BY L. F. PENET.